New high-speed modems to provide low-cost access

Bloomberg

SKOKIE, Ill.— U.S. Robotics Corp. and Texas Instruments Inc. said next year they will bring out a new range of computer modems offering Internet access at seven times the speed of the fastest modems currently available.

The new products will feature a technology, known as digital subscriber loop, that uses a wider range of frequencies to achieve higher speeds on ordinary copper telephone wires.

The new modem, named X2/DSL, will be out in the first half of 1998, and will cost about $250 US, about $50 to $100 more than U.S. Robotics' current so-called X2/56 kilobyte modems.

The new devices will initially reach speeds of up to 384 kilobytes per second, with later versions running as fast as seven megabytes per second, U.S. Robotics said.

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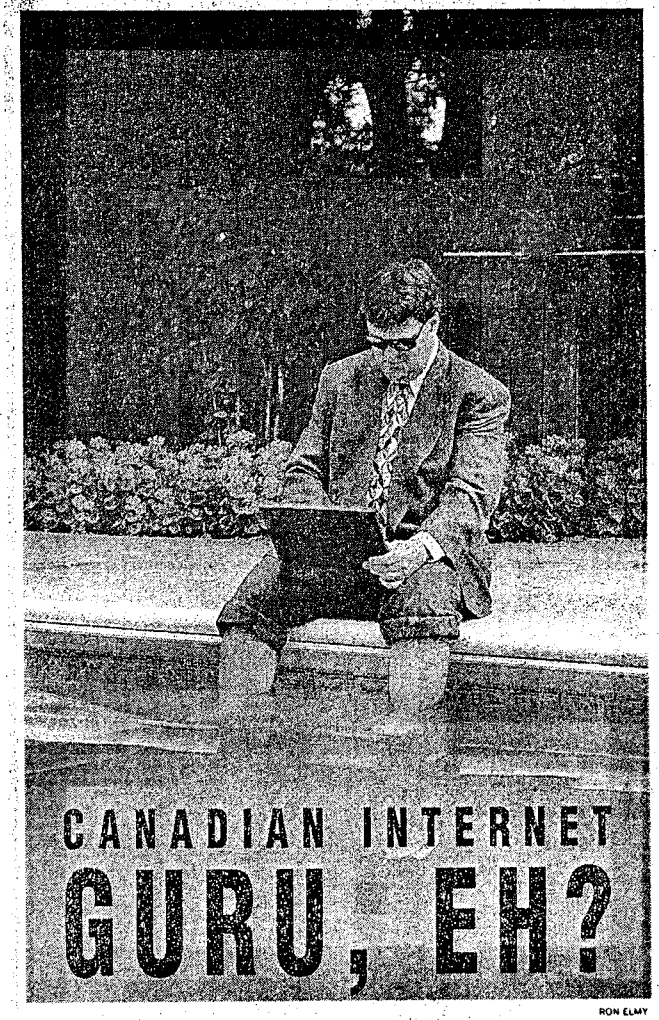

CANADIAN INTERNET GURU, EH?

RON ELMY

Quick with a quote, Jim Carroll is the Net expert Fortune 500 executives have taken to heart

PETER WILSON
Sun Business Reporter

Jim Carroll tends to talk in sound bites these days.

Canada's Internet guru (a term he shrugs off with genuine embarrassment) is out hustling book number 13. And he knows exactly what television and radio want from him — the heart of the essence of the kernel of his latest message:

"For a lot of baby boomers their first experience with a computer was like their first bad sexual experience. It's stayed with them ever since."

And there it is. With that single quote Carroll has cut to the chase on *Surviving the Information Age* (Prentice Hall Canada, $10.95), his perceptive take on what cyber-anxious boomers can do to stay alive as business people in the age of the Internet.

And if Carroll — who has sold 300,000 copies of his high-tech books in the past six years — is steered away from the concerns of his current volume he's equally ready with a pithy comment on other Web-related topics:

"All these people running around building cybermalls, thinking they're going to sell things in them. It's the most braindead thing I've ever heard of."

Or: "People keep asking me can you use the Internet for business? The answer is 'yes' — if you keep your head on your shoulders and refuse to get caught up in the hype."

Even in a print interview the energetic, smooth-voiced and genuinely likable Carroll barely slows down to take a breath. He admits that when he's performing in front of a group of Fortune 500 executives, spreading the word about the Internet, he's not quite the chartered accountant he started out to be:

"I get wired up on the stage. I'm bouncing around all the time. In some ways I've become an entertainer."

And yet: "The fact is that they're hiring me because I have become a bit of a name and it still freaks me out."

What we have here is a genuine Canadian phenom, a man who has made a name for himself in his own country and primarily on his own terms as an expert in a field that, despite what he often says, has to be just about the most hyped topic of the past 40 years.

It began back in 1985, Carroll says, when he was

Please see Carroll, D10

Sound bites from Jim Carroll:

On business and the Internet:

"Business is so totally clued out about this thing. You've got the technical people who think the big issue is Java vs Active X. At the same time the guys at the top are not involved and they're not involved because they don't understand strategically how they can use this as a form of electronic glue with their customers. So most Internet initiatives are just dismal failures."

On one way you can tell a Web site is a failure:

"I hit a site the other day for a Fortune 500 company. The last press release there was dated Oct. 14. That implies that here's a situation where management is not involved — there's no budget money behind it because there's been no articulated business strategy and they don't realize the way their customers obtain information is changing."

On what will sell on the Net:

"Certain things. Books. CDs. travel. But is HMV in any trouble? Not a chance. I go into a CD store because I love to browse the racks and look at things and see what's hot and what's new. You don't get that experience on the Web.

On what else will be big:

"Financial services. By 2020, 80 per cent of the world's economic transactions will be running through the Net.

On what won't sell on the Net:

"I see these folks running around talking about selling groceries on the Net. Sure, small numbers of people will do it for small numbers of niche products. But I told the executives of a shopping mall developer that I didn't think they were in imminent danger of collapse."

At the same time:

"Grocery stores themselves will be increasingly purchasing such things as bananas electronically from suppliers. But you'll still want to go there and look at the banana to see if it's ripe."

On the the best advice he could give:

"I would be optimistic but cautious. I get frustrated right now because I see too many people caught up in the hype, in the unrealistic promises. I see a lot of people involved with some wild Internet initiative that they think is going to be wonderful and then their hopes are dashed."

More best advice:

"There's something pretty darn important happening here but it's not happening in the next few minutes. The PC revolution took 10 to 15 years to unfold and this is also going to take that length of time. You can learn to make it work for you but you've got to careful, you've got to continue working the real world and you've got to be real in your expectations."

Carroll constantly on call for speeches, consulting

Continued from D8

with the firm of Thorne Riddell in Halifax and was brought to Toronto to help develop an internal electronic mail network called Thornet.

"We said, heck, let's use electronic mail communications technology to tie ourselves to our clients and maybe we can provide them with better service. It was a great idea, but we were 10 years ahead of our time."

Three and a half years ago, however, Carroll and co-author Rick Broadhead were in tune with the mood of the country when they wrote the first edition of *The Canadian Internet Handbook*.

"I remember I was swimming in the pool with my lawyer and I said 'I want to do a book' and he said 'well, you do a book, but remember you don't make money off books.'"

The lawyer was wrong. The *Internet Handbook*, through its various editions has been a constant Canadian bestseller. After that came eleven more books, including *The Canadian Internet Advantage: Opportunities for Canadian Business and Organizations* and *Canadian Money Management Online: Personal Finances on the Net*.

"I was lucky in that I got in when the Net started to explode. But I already had the right frame of mind to comprehend what's going on out there. And these days you'll notice I'm the only guy who's running around the country dismissing the idea of this whole online shopping thing."

In fact, the books are now only a part of the way Carroll makes his living. He's constantly on call for speeches and consulting.

"I'm speaking to the Conference Board of Canada at the end of the month. and I talk with a lot of the Fortune 500 companies to help them comprehend strategically what this thing is going to do to their business."

AT&T Canada just had Carroll describe the business impact of the Net to the management of some of its key corporate customers. And he's off to Florida this week to talk to the convention of the Association of Canadian Travel Associations. After that there's a booking with the the Ontario Seed Association to chat about the impact of our wired world on agriculture.

"You can't sit at your computer and wait for magic to happen because it won't. The Net is simply another tool that can help you."

When he's not doing that he's consulting.

"I interview key management. What is your business? What are your challenges? Who are your competitors? Where are you trying to take your markets? Now let me turn around and tell you how you can use this darn thing called the Internet in the short, the medium and the long term."

Carroll credits the Internet not only for providing him with a living but also for helping him promote his services (in that his clients often know enough about him just from perusing his Web site at **http://www.jimcarroll.com**) and for allowing him to have a working environment that's fully integrated into his home and family life.

"I'm having a ball," says Carroll whose wife, also a CA, quit her job as a controller with a major company to become his business partner. "I work at home and we've got a two-year-old and a four-year-old and I probably get to spend more time with my kids than most other fathers. Their kids wake up when they're 20 and say 'who the hell are you?' That's not happening with me."

Last summer, while 1,400 square feet were being added to his suburban Toronto home, Carroll wrote four books.

"I'm the only guy in the neighborhood with a local area network that runs through the whole house. We've got jacks in every room."

But, adds Carroll, for all this freedom he still has to hustle. Anyone who believes that working at home means not going out into the real world is mistaken. "I still have plenty of client meetings but I don't schedule them until after 9:30 a.m. I get up at six and then at nine I get ready to go to the meeting.

"If you're going to build a consulting business you've got to have a lot of lunches, you've got to have a big Rolodex and you're going to have to be on the phone a lot. You can't sit at your computer and wait for magic to happen because it won't. The Net is simply another tool that can help you."

And a final word for those who are afraid to take advantage of the high-tech world around them?

"You can choose to opt out. Great. Go for it. But recognize the implications of doing that because the world of business is going to change as it figures this stuff out."